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By GREGG HERRINGTON

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON AP - The federal narcotics-control chief indicated Wednesday the heroin traffic which he said kills hundreds and costs \$3.5 billion annually is sustained in part by governmental inaction or officials' connivance in several foreign countries.

John Ingersoll, director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, told congressmen the problem is so widespread that throughout Southeast Asia middle-level government officials and military men are trafficking in opium which is converted into heroin and sold to American soldiers in South Vietnam.

Ingersoll's testimony before the House Select Committee on Crime brought demands from some members for a get-tough attitude on the part of the United States to induce greater cooperation in controlling the international heroin traffic. France came in for particularly sharp criticism.

Even planes owned by Air America, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency-backed airline, have been unwittingly used in the transport of opium in Southeast Asia, Ingersoll said. "And so has Air Vietnam, Air Laos and TWA, as far as that goes."

He said four weeks ago 80 kilograms-176 pounds-of opium were discovered on an Air America plane in Laos.

Ingersoll said the total drain on the U.S. economy caused by heroin traffic is as high as \$3.5 billion a year. This includes, he said, the cost of crime committed by addicts as well as the law enforcement costs.

Ingersoll said the great majority of heroin in the United States—some estimates are 80 per cent—comes from opium grown in Turkey and processed into heroin in France.

He said "we are confident the Turkish government could enforce a total ban" on opium if it had the inclination.

He declined to recommend that Turkey be pressured to do this but said, "We shall continue to work for" a total international ban on opium production.

Ingersoll said that following a recent trip to opium-growing nations he has recommended a multistep program aimed immediately at intercepting illegal heroin headed for U.S. servicemen and the United States itself while also striving for long-range goals such as converting Turkish farmers to crops other than the opium poppy.

He refused to discuss his recommendations and said they are currently being considered by the Nixon administration.

Rep. Charles B. Rangel, D-N.Y., committee Chairman Claude Pepper, D-Fla., and others on the panel complained that Ingersoll's 1,300-man BNDD force is not large enough.

led by Pepper and Rep. Jerome Waldie, D-Calif., several panel members said it is time for the United States to get tough with countries involved in opium growing and heroin production.

Noting that most U.S. heroin is made in France from opium grown in Turkey, Pepper said 1,100 New York City residents die each year from heroin overdoses.

"If the French fired rockets into New York City every day and killed three or four residents each time you can imagine the public outcry," he said.

"We ought to be very insistent with the French," Pepper said. "We expect them as our friend to treat this as an emergency," he added, declaring that only 100 French agents are trying to stop heroin production.

Ingersoll told reporters that it is his impression from his trip that participation in the opium traffic in Southeast Asia is fairly common among middle-level government officials.

He noted a South Vietnamese legislator was recently jailed for transporting drugs and said others in the legislature and executive branch of the government also are involved.

Nevertheless, Ingersoll said, "I did not find one unresponsive" high-level government official on his trip.

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